4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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have done an excess of good deeds over bad it is destined for heaven, whereas if there is an excess of bad deeds over good it is consigned to hell. "If you live a good life you can wait and see the human world; when you die you can wait and see the heavenly world." Badagas do not believe in the further reincarnation of souls, for each soul suffers seven births, but only the seventh incarnation is in human form, the previous ones having been as animals. God assigns a soul to each person at birth, and writes on his brow the exact number of years he or she will live. Even God can sometimes be wrong, however, because an attack by a wild animal, a suicide, murder or some other calamity, may deprive the body of life before it was destined to die. In this dilemma the soul is obliged to remain on the face of the earth for the balance of time until the day when God had intended it to depart this life. In the words of another proverb: "While living he has no blessing of God; when dead he is not in heaven." In this way ghosts are to be found on the Nilgiri Hills, hovering just above the ground with their feet pointing backwards and making a frightening sound—sometimes a screech and sometimes a groan.

Ghosts in general continue to have ordinary human needs, which they seek to satisfy. One ghost told listeners during a seance that it had lived for a while in hollow trees, but it found this very uncomfortable. Mostly ghosts want to be inside people so that they will be safe, warm and well fed. When a ghost has been exorcised from somebody, it may therefore possess another person or else live inside an animal if it is not properly trapped. Further expression of the ghost's humanity comes in the seance, when it may ask for unusual foods, liquor, cigarettes or good clothing, as a pre-condition for its leaving the possessed person. Particularly the ghosts of young people, suicides because of their anxieties and frustrations, may ask for the things they could not enjoy while alive, and will demand extra singing and dancing during the seance too.

Some Badagas are possessed by non-Badaga ghosts, in which case a ghost may speak through the victim's mouth in Toda, Malayalam, English or some other language not in fact known to the possessed person! Interpreters are sometimes brought in to help with such an exorcism.

Despite their widespread belief in ghosts, Badagas are initially skeptical of a person's claim to be possessed. They will therefore begin a seance by a questioning period to see if the ghost is "genui-

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
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763 564 payment. They are the lowest of the Baḍaga castes and are regarded as the sons of the five high castes. As soon as the Toraya who carries the sad news approaches a Baḍaga village he removes his turban, so that the very sight of a Toraya without a turban on his head is a sign that he is bringing tidings of death, and the people gather round him at once and hear the news.

535 764 (648) (715) [562] The Kôtas, the hill-musicians, come down now with their shrill music. Then a curious dance commences and the more vehement the dance, the happier it is thought will be the soul of the departed in its transit to the other world. It lasts from morning to evening, and Torayas and Baḍagas including the near relatives of the dead Baḍaga take part in the dance. No woman mingles in the funeral dance if the dead person is a man, but if the deceased is a woman, one old woman, the nearest relative of the dead, takes part in it. This is as it were a notice to the mourners who come to join in the funeral as to whether the dead person is a man or a woman. If no woman is seen in the party of dancers the visitors infer before reaching the house that it is a man that is dead, while if they see a woman among the dancers they know that it is the funeral of a woman that is being performed. Only Torayas mix (648) in the dance with the Baḍagas. The Kôtas who are the musicians on this occasion are not allowed to do so, for they are considered to be of inferior, in fact, of the very lowest position. Some of the men that take part in the dance wear a curious long coat. When one has danced for a considerable time, he takes off the robe and hands it over to someone else who continues the exercise till he too has had enough of it. Whether this special dress has any peculiar significance I cannot say at present. 764 The Torayas then fetch green boughs and twigs from the neighbouring *sholas* and a car five feet long, three feet broad and eight feet high is constructed. When everything is ready all the people assembled go and show their (544) respect for the corpse by touching it on the head. The Torayas alone touch the feet and worship the departed Baḍaga, an indication that they are rather servants than equals of the departed. The corpse is then brought out of the house to a cot placed outside. The agnatic kindred then wash it by pouring water over it and decorate it. Already preparations have been made for a grand feast and before the removal of the corpse every one eats (774) his dinner, except perhaps the nearest relatives of the dead. This is to our ideas a most repulsive custom, and the only defence in favour of it is the belief they have that this feast refreshes the

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soul of the dead person. The same custom prevails among the Lingayats of Maisûr, and this is an additional proof of the theory that the Badagas are colonists from that country. After this is over, all lift up the corpse and place it inside the car to the accompaniments of a volley of Kôta music and a display of Toraya dancing. The whole procession now marches towards the burning ground, and at a little distance from it a curious ceremony takes place. The wife here takes leave of her departed husband. A small piece of wire from her left ear-ring and a similar bit of wire from her right ear-ring are taken out by one of the agnatic kindred of the dead person, and these are placed in the palm of her hand along with a small palm-leaf roll. She rolls all these three up in a corner of her departed husband's cloth and knots them by a thread. She returns home then with music and dancing. This may indicate her sending away her husband to the other world with symbolical indications of her own relationship to him in this world.

After the wife has thus left, another still more curious ceremony is performed. A large mud vessel containing several kinds of grain, cooked rice and ghee is brought. The eldest woman of the family of the dead—mother or grand-mother, if they are alive—mix these up and make small balls of the mixture. The first ball is given to the eldest agnatic kinsman alive, who receives it with a knife. The other balls, thirty-one, forty-one, fifty-one, or sixty-one in number, are taken by different persons. The empty mud vessel is taken up by the old woman on the end of a reaping-hook; they all march round and round the dead body with these balls; all the males go round by the right and the females by the left; each one throws his ball on the head of the corpse which becomes almost covered up by them; the old woman breaks the mud vessel at its feet. The meaning of this curious ceremony as the Badagas interpret it is that enough has been done for the departed and that the dead man's connection with those alive has entirely ceased by the breaking of the pot. The old woman who broke the vessel now turns towards the river without entering the burning ground, and all the other women too who have up to this point followed the procession now turn towards the river to bathe.

After this ceremony, the dead body is carried on the car to the burning or burying ground. Of the six classes of Badagas, three, the Kanakas, the Udayas and the Adhikâris, bury their dead and the other three burn.

So far the ceremonies are the same, both in burying and in